



# Share, Inspire, Involve

SUMMARY

# 1. What is ‘public engagement’?

*“Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.”*

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)

## 1.1 What does ‘public engagement’ mean to the University?

To us ‘public engagement’ means the many ways we connect, share and involve the public with our work locally, nationally and internationally. Public engagement encompasses all disciplines and is mutually beneficial to staff, students and the public, so enabling the sharing of knowledge and expertise to solve problems; to inspire researchers and students of the future; to stimulate new areas of research; and to have an impact on society.

## 1.2 The ‘public’

Whilst there is a high degree of overlap between categories, ‘our own’ communities are typically thought of as staff, students and alumni. The public is therefore everyone else, including funders, businesses, patients, policymakers, the voluntary and private sectors, schools and colleges, or people, families and organisations in various communities. To engage effectively it is important to identify, prioritise and target specific stakeholder and groups, whether that’s based on their identity, where they live or work, or their specific needs and interests.

## 1.3 Breadth of engagement

Public engagement covers a wide breadth of activities and contributions and can range from more information-giving activities to activities that are public-led, and everything in between, for example:

- sharing our spaces and equipment, research and our knowledge with the public
- involving the public and stakeholders in driving/developing our research and teaching
- widening participation and recruitment
- stimulating awareness, discussion and debate
- applying student work to address public needs.

## 1.4 Activities and resources

Public engagement across the University is also supported and recognised by various resources, networks and events, which include:

1. **Our Public and Cultural Institutions:** the Manchester Museum, The Whitworth, John Rylands Library, Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre, Students’ Union venues, Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama and the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre.
2. **Policy@Manchester:** an initiative to showcase the contribution of academics from The University of Manchester to public policy development in the UK.
3. **Engagement@Manchester:** a network of practicing ‘engagers’ who provide support and resources, for example a dedicated web site, a public engagement listserv, share and learn lunchtime events and cross-faculty activities for key events such as Manchester Histories and Manchester Science Festival.

## 2. Current structures and activities

*“At Manchester our core goal of social responsibility ensures we are fully committed to encouraging, supporting and rewarding public engagement.”*

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor

### 2.1 Structures and governance

Public engagement contributes to all of our core strategic goals in the University’s Manchester 2020 Strategic Plan as it enhances research, teaching and student experience and enables us to work with our communities to achieve this. No part of the University has a monopoly on this agenda and a range of committed staff and students from across different services, functions, divisions, institutes and institutions organise and deliver a wide range of engagement activities that are integral to social responsibility, teaching and research. This provides a very rich tapestry of engagement and reflects how public engagement is part of the ‘DNA of the University’.

## 3. Our vision and principles

*“We believe that universities and research institutes have a major responsibility to contribute to society through their public engagement, and that they have much to gain in return. We are committed to sharing our knowledge, resources and skills with the public, and to listening to and learning from the expertise and insight of the different communities with which we engage.”*

The Engaged University: Manifesto for Public Engagement

### 3.1 Our vision

#### *Share, Inspire, Involve*

Our ambition is to carry out high quality engagement, working with diverse audiences to **share** ideas and research and **inspire** informed discussion, debate and creativity. We seek to lead on public engagement in all forms, to **involve** the public in our work and provide expertise in public discourse and policy development, listening to the wider community. We will enable this through provision of networks and practical resources and support, so continuing to embed public engagement across all areas of our work including research, teaching and learning.

### 3.2 Our principles and values

Our key principles of public engagement are underpinned by our guiding values:

- **Adaptable:** Actively listening and responding accordingly.
- **Accessible:** Being respectful and open
- **Sharing:** reflecting, getting feedback, and sharing learning.
- **Inclusive:** Ensuring we are public-centred so we meet public needs.
- **Integrity:** being credible, consistent and honest about our capabilities and limitations.

## 4. Priorities

### 4.1 Priority 1: Achieving high quality

To continually improve the quality of our public engagement activities.

### 4.2 Priority 2: Creating a more supportive environment

To enhance and develop existing structures, resources and training to support staff and students to engage the public in their research and work.

### 4.3 Priority 3: Improving co-ordination

To improve how public engagement is co-ordinated across the University to maximise opportunities and effectiveness, communication, create new research and teaching opportunities and raise our profile.

### 4.4 Priority 4: Diversifying audiences

To work to understand audience needs and diversify the range of public audiences we engage with locally, nationally and internationally to reflect those groups identified as a priority by the University.

### 4.5 Priority 5: Evidencing impact

To ensure we build an evidence base of how our public engagement is making a difference and having an impact.

#### Key contacts:

Engagement@Manchester <http://www.engagement.manchester.ac.uk/index.html>

Policy@Manchester <https://www.policy.manchester.ac.uk/>

Centre for Engagement & Involvement, Faculty of Biology, Medicine & Health  
<https://www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/connect/social-responsibility/communities/>

Our public and cultural institutions <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/open-public/>